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THE RUSSIAN DOUKHOBORS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS

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Of all European countries Russia is the most prolific in religious sects. Distrust of the Orthodox state church, on the one hand, which is regarded as too closely allied to the political power and unmindful of its duties to the people, and, on the other, religious ignorance with its consequent superstition, have given rise to innumerable sects, which range from religious nihilism to the most rigid traditionalism.

It has been justly said that Russian Christianity is, above all else, a ritual Christianity. It rarely penetrates to the hearts of its members, the recesses of the moral life of the individual. Its task, its mission, is social rather than individual, and, above all, is external: the pomp of the rites, the splendor of the ceremonies, the richness of the sacred vestments and ornaments, constitute the essential element in the religious life of the Russian people.

Against this general tendency of Russian orthodoxy have sprung up, through a spirit of reaction and under the influence of Protestantism, the rationalistic sects, which aim to rid Russian Christianity of its ritual dross, to bring into greater activity the inner life of religious feeling, and to establish direct relations between God and man without the mediation of pastors invested with a divine mission. These sects, in short, while not rejecting Christianity, propose to simplify it, to free it from its theological *patina*, so to speak, and to make its great principles effective in the life of society.

Among the rationalistic sects which in recent times have been eager to bring about a social transformation through a simplification of Christianity, doctrinal as well as ritual, the best known is that of the Doukhobors, or "Champions of the Spirit." Their tragic vicissitudes, the ringing appeals of Tolstoi to the civilized world in their behalf, the heroism of their attempts to effect a reconstruction of the social order which would overturn the foundations of modern society and establish the kingdom of God in the depths of every soul, have given them a wide reputation. In the present article I propose to narrate briefly the origin and history of the sect, and especially to set forth at somewhat greater length its religious teachings as given in authentic documents.

The name of the Doukhobors (Russian, *Doukhobortsy*) is derived from two Russian words, *dukh*, "spirit," and *borets*, "champion, contestant." Taken in a negative sense, the name may be interpreted as a striving *against* the Spirit; and in this sense it is used by the adversaries of the Doukhobors, who consider them as heretics who reject all the elements of the supernatural life of the church and the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul through the instrumentality of the sacraments. The Doukhobors, on the contrary, interpret the name of the sect in a positive sense: they are the men who contend *for* the Spirit, its champions; that is, enemies of the external element of religion, preaching the worship of God in spirit and in truth. Their aim is to re-establish Christianity in its purity, to devote themselves to the service of the Spirit, and in it to make their own all the energies of the spiritual life. For this reason they also call themselves "the Sons of God," because the Spirit of God manifests itself in them with greater vigor. The designation "Doukhobortsy" was first used by Ambrose Serebrennikov, Archbishop of Ekaterinoslav, who died in 1792.

The historical origin of the Doukhobors is involved in dense obscurity. The leaders of the sect assert that their teachings are derived from the three Jewish youths (Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) whom Nebuchadnezzar threw into the fiery furnace. It is possible, as Novicky supposes, that these youths symbolize the first preachers of the sectarian doctrine, Kuhlman and Nordman, who were burned alive at Moscow in 1689 for preaching the necessity of the second advent of Christ, or, perhaps, Demetrius Tveritinov, founder of a Russian sect at Moscow in 1713, who, with his followers, was condemned to perish at the stake.

According to a Doukhobor confession of faith presented in 1791 to Kakhovsky, governor of Ekaterinoslav, the cradle of the sect was in the village of Nikolskoe, or Nikolavevka, in the district of Pavlograd, government of Ekaterinoslav, and its first apostle was Sylvan Kolesnikov (1750-75).¹

Kolesnikov cannot, however, be regarded as the first founder of the sect. About 1740 a former sergeant in the Prussian army in the village of Okhooce (district of Zmiev, province of Kharkov) preached the doctrine of the Quakers, closely resembling that of the Doukhobors.²

In 1737 there arose at Moscow another sect, which professed that a revelation was made by God immediately to each of its members, rejected the rites of the Church, ascribed to the sacraments a symbolical value only, and in its assemblies invoked the Holy Spirit. Whatever may be the case with these hypotheses, it is a fact that there is a close kinship between the doctrines of the English Quakers and those of the Doukhobors. We have, indeed, no knowledge of the way in which the religious teachings of the English sect were propagated in Russia;

¹ This document is published in the *Ctenia* (Lectures) of the Society of Russian History and Antiquities, associated with the University of Moscow, Vol. II (1871), pp. 26-79.

² Lenz, *Commentationes de Duchoborcis* (Dorpat, 1829), p. 9.

but it appears indubitable that the Doukhobors are one of the ramifications of English Quakerism, to whose doctrines in more recent times have been added elements derived from Tolstoi.

Toward the end of the 18th century, Doukhobors were scattered all over Russia, but their chief centres were in the governments of Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, and Tambov. They are numerous also in the Ukraine, which Novicky regards as the cradle of the sect.³ The Russian government treated them with the greatest severity, because it saw in their teachings the seeds of future social revolutions. In 1779 the Doukhobors among the Cossacks of the Don were exiled to Siberia; the same fate overtook those of Kharkov in 1793-94. Other Doukhobors were sentenced to flogging, to have their noses cut off, to confiscation of their goods; women as well as men had to endure this inhuman treatment.⁴

Under the rule of Alexander I, the condition of the Doukhobors was greatly ameliorated. Two senators, Lopukhin and Neledinski-Meletzky, appointed in 1801 to investigate the state of the Doukhobors, urged upon the Czar to mitigate the severity of the laws in regard to them. By a ukase of January 25, 1802, Alexander I decreed that the Doukhobors who had been banished to Siberia should be allowed, with a subsidy from the government, to establish themselves on the banks of the river Molotchnaia in the government of the Tauris. Another ukase (December 16, 1804) granted the same permission to the Doukhobors of the provinces of Tambov and Voroneje. This concentration of the adherents of the sect on the banks of the Molotchnaia lasted until 1821, when the Russian government forbade it.

³ Livanov, *The Molokans and the Doukhobors of Tambov in the 18th Century*, *Vsemirnyi Trud*, Vol. III (1867), pp. 245-297; *The Molokans and the Doukhobors in the Ukraine*, *Viestnik Evropy*, Vol. X (1868), pp. 673-701; XII, pp. 809-836.

⁴ Novicky, *The Doukhobors. Their History and Religious Doctrines* (Kiev, 1882), pp. 51-54.

The fertility of the soil and the mildness of the climate were so favorable to the growth of the Doukhobors that by 1808 they already possessed nine villages, Bogdanovka, Spasskoe, Troitzkoe, Terpienie, and Tambovka, on the banks of the river, Rodionovka, Efremovka, Gorieloe, and Kirillovka, near the lake of Molotchnaia. Terpienie was the religious centre of the sect, the residence of its head, Savelio Kapustin, who introduced community of goods and collective labor for his own benefit. From 1805 to 1820 the economic prosperity of the Doukhobors continually increased; the purity of their morals and their observance of the laws of the state gained them the favor of Alexander I, who abstained from persecuting them, although certain orthodox bishops, for instance, Job Potemkin, Archbishop of Ekaterinoslav (1812-13), tried to incite him to do so.

The situation changed under Nicolas I (1825-55), who, at the instigation of the orthodox clergy, renewed rigorous measures against the Doukhobors, and sent many of them to Siberia. A ukase of January 26, 1841, decreed that the colonists on the Molotchnaia should migrate to the government of Imeretia and settle in the district of Akhaltzykh in Transcaucasia. The Doukhobors stolidly accepted this decision, and between the years 1841 and 1845 five thousand of them migrated to that district. Here they built new villages, and exhibited marvellous endurance of the severity of the climate. The headship of the sect had passed into the hands of an energetic woman, Luceria Kalmykova, who called to her assistance in her mission a peasant, Peter Vasilevic Verighin. When she died, in 1886, she named Verighin as her successor.

The change of government in Russia in 1881, with the assassination of Alexander II, and the hostility of Pobiedonostzev, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, against all the Russian sects, provoked anew severe

measures against the Doukhobors. Peter Verighin and five prominent members of the sect were exiled to the government of Archangel; and since Verighin continued to direct the affairs of the sect from his exile, the Russian government banished him to one of the most desolate cities of Siberia, Obdorsk.⁵ As he was passing through Moscow in 1894, before setting out for Siberia, Verighin received as a gift from Tolstoi that author's famous work *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. This book had a great influence on the subsequent development of the religious teachings of the sect. At the same time, Verighin advised his brother, Basil Verighin, who had come to visit him in Moscow, to counsel his fellow religionists to abstain from taking oaths, to refuse to serve in the army, not to participate in any act of violence, and to destroy their arms.

His counsels were put in practice. Some desertions occurred at Elisabetpol, Kars, Akhalkalaki, Tiflis, and Manglis. Other Doukhobors refused to render military service, or burned their arms. The Russian government replied to these acts of insubordination by first occupying the Doukhobor villages with some companies of Cossacks, and in the sequel compelling their inhabitants to migrate to Georgian villages in the districts of Duchet, Gory, Tionety, and Signakh. As they were allowed only three days to prepare for their departure, they were compelled to dispose of their cattle and their fields at prices greatly below their value.

Scattered through the Georgian villages, the Doukhobors had to suffer extreme privations from poverty and the rigor of the climate. Many of them became blind. In the space of three years, four hundred and fifty persons died. Believing themselves doomed to speedy extermination, they refrained from procreating children.

⁵ Biriukov, *The Doukhobors: collection of articles, reports, letters, and other documents, with a selection of their psalms* (Moscow, 1908), pp. 65 f.

A report of their sufferings written in 1897 contains the following lamentable details: "In the Georgian villages the proprietors of the land demanded that the Doukhobors should labor for them almost for nothing, or be satisfied with a morsel of bread; and they, in conformity with their religious principles, made no complaint. Famine began to mow down its victims in their ranks. Furthermore, the authorities did not allow the dead to be buried in Christian cemeteries. There were cases in which the Doukhobors, expelled from their villages, died of want or of disease by the roadside, and the survivors had to drag the bodies with them because they were not permitted to bury them. They were, in fact, interred in the fields with the consent of the owners."

The sufferings of the Doukhobors had an echo in Russia. Tolstoi took up his pen in their defence. In a letter addressed to them in 1897 he congratulated them on the persecutions they were subjected to for Christ's cause. In another letter, of March 19, 1898, he turned to the civilized world and called for aid for a people of twelve thousand souls condemned to the most atrocious persecutions because of their zeal to put into effect the great principles of Christianity. In the same year, Peter Verighin, from his place of exile, wrote as follows to the Empress Alexandra Theodorovna: "I beseech you, O sister in Christ, Alexandra, to persuade your husband to put an end to this persecution of the Christians. The women and children suffer in our villages; hundreds of men languish in prison. We are guilty of but one offence—that of wishing to remain Christians. We have renounced the use of flesh, of wine, and of everything that tends to the corruption of morals. And if we do not kill animals, it is not strange that we do not admit the possibility of killing one of our own kind. The government demands of us that we learn the use of arms, that is to say, the trade of

murder. To these commands we will not yield. In the Caucasus we are hardly twenty thousand; consequently, we can inflict no loss on the government, even if we refuse to render military service. The best thing, therefore, would be for us to remove elsewhere, to a place where we can live unmolested."

Convinced that the Doukhobors were resolved to die rather than to give up their principles, the Russian government gave them permission to emigrate from Russia, on condition that they should remove at their own charges, and that they should never return.

By the aid of the financial and moral support given them by the English Quakers, the Doukhobors began to emigrate to the Island of Cyprus. The first company, consisting of 1,126 persons, disembarked there on August 26, 1898, and established themselves in the villages of Atalassa, Pergamos, and Kukhlia. The lands allotted to them were fertile, and the Doukhobors set themselves with feverish activity to cultivate them. But the unhealthy climate rendered all their exertions vain; in a few months fifty-one deaths occurred among them. The rest then asked to be allowed to emigrate to Canada.

The first company, about two thousand in number, arrived there in January, 1899, and directed their journey to the province of Manitoba. These came from the villages of Bogdanovka, Troitzkoe, Orlovka, Tambovka, Spasskoe, and Efremovka. A week later they were joined by nineteen hundred from the province of Kars and from the government of Elisabetpol. In June a thousand arrived from Cyprus, and, shortly after, two thousand more from the province of Kars; so that the whole number exceeded seven thousand. The cities of Selkirk and Winnipeg in Manitoba became their principal centres. On the lands assigned them they erected eight hundred houses.⁶

⁶ Tversky, *The Epic of the Doukhobors*. St. Petersburg, 1900.

On February 27, 1900, Count Tolstoi sent them a letter, which is a formal invective against private property: "To gather together an individual fortune," he wrote, "and to keep it for one's self, is to do contrary to the will of God and to his laws." The Doukhobors made haste to put in practice Tolstoi's theories. On February 11, 1901, in a letter addressed to all nations, they protested against the laws of Canada. They declared that private property is a violation of the divine laws; that marriage and divorce do not fall under the jurisdiction of human laws; that the police and the state have no business to register births and deaths.

This letter was sent to the civil authorities of Canada also, October 14, 1900. The government replied, January 7, 1901, reminding the Doukhobors of the hospitality they had received, and declaring that it was not possible to change for them the general legislation.

In 1902, Peter Verighin arrived in Canada. The Doukhobors received him as a representative of divinity. He insisted on the necessity of the Doukhobors possessing all of their property in common, but at the same time restrained the zeal of some fanatics who wanted to turn loose their horses and cows because man has no right to compel them to labor as slaves.

Several hundreds of Doukhobors, released from their exile in Siberia, reached Canada in 1905, bringing up the whole number to about eight thousand. Under the direction of Peter Verighin they began to practise the community of goods, to cultivate their lands in common, and to distribute food in equal rations to the workers. In 1907, the government of Canada, in order to constrain the Doukhobors to submit to the general legislation, took away from them a large part of the lands which had been assigned them, and distributed it to immigrants of other nationalities. The allotments of land originally assigned to the Doukhobors at the rate

of a hundred and sixty acres to each family were cut down to fifteen acres. The Doukhobors made no protest, and declared that they had bought other lands to cultivate in common.

As Biriukov, one of their admirers, writes: "Their struggle with the world, with evils within and without, is not yet ended. Their ideal is infinite. The Doukhobors themselves recognize the relative feebleness of their powers, the remoteness of the goal they are seeking to attain. The forces of the contestants are not equal. The two parties are guided by different conceptions of life. On one side, the world, with its material enjoyments; on the other, the doctrine of Christ, which does not annul the eternal blessedness of the free spirit. On one side, death, on the other, life. To us Russians, these pure ideals of strong men, of modest workers, ought to be dear."

The investigation of the religious beliefs of the Doukhobors is rendered difficult by the scarcity of documents which give precise information about the doctrines professed by them. The principal documents relating to their teachings are the following:

1. The Confession of Faith of the Doukhobors of the province of Ekaterinoslav, sent in 1791 to the governor Kakhovsky. Novicky is inclined to think that this confession is to be attributed to the Malorussian philosopher Skovoroda.⁷ This confession is a real little theological treatise, which discloses in its author a mind accustomed to constructive thinking.⁸

2. The colloquy between the archimandrite (later, metropolitan) Eugene Bolkhovitinov (1837) and two Doukhobors of Tambov, Matthew and Ermolaus Kuzmin. The colloquy took place in the monastery of Alexander

⁷ Novicky, pp. 210 f.

⁸ It is printed in the *Cteniiia* of Moscow, Vol. V (1874), pp. 137-145; in the *Vestnik Evropy*, Vol. X (1868), pp. 697-700; and in the work of Butkevitch, *Dukhobortsy* (Kharkov, 1909), pp. 29-34.

Nevsky in St. Petersburg in 1802. Rather than an official exposition of the doctrine of the Doukhobors, the document records the personal opinions of those who took part in the conference.

3. An expository résumé of the teachings of the Doukhobors, composed in 1805 by the senator Lopukhin.⁹

4. The Catechism of the Doukhobors. There are two different redactions. One of them is ascribed to Count Tolstoi or to Prince Khilkov, and intersperses political and social aphorisms among religious maxims; the other is entitled *Principles of the Doctrine of the Doukhobors*, and contains two hundred and thirty-two questions and answers, divided into two tractates.¹⁰

5. The principal source, however, is the so-called *Living Book* of the Doukhobors, published by Bontch-Bronevitch, at St. Petersburg, 1909. By the title *Living Book* the Doukhobors designate oral tradition, that tradition which lives in their minds and in their hearts, and is contrasted with the Bible, the book of the dead. The book is composed of psalms woven together of verses and phrases from the Psalter, extracts from the Old and New Testaments, prayers and fragments of the Orthodox liturgical books, ideas and doctrines peculiar to the sect. These psalms, the Doukhobors say, are so many that they cannot be numbered. No single man, though endowed with the strongest mind, can learn them all. The book is therefore preserved in its entirety in the memory of the whole community; it is the complex of all their memories and all their hearts; it is handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth; fathers reveal it to their sons. It endures eternally, as the soul which comprises it in itself is eternal. It is incorruptible, and

⁹ Characteristic Treatises of the Society of the Doukhobors. Ctenia, Vol. III (1861), pp. 3-16; Butkevitch, pp. 35-40.

¹⁰ It is to be found in the Livanov's book, Raskolniki, I, 463-470; Butkevitch, pp. 41-56.

in this differs from the Bible, which contains an alteration of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The origins of the *Living Book* go back to the beginnings of Christianity. The Evangelists report with many inaccuracies the teachings and deeds of Jesus Christ. Others, however, preferred to preserve in their hearts the treasures of the Christian revelation, and transmitted the same to the forefathers of the Doukhobors. Furthermore, Jesus Christ granted to the heads of the Doukhobors the authority to select the best passages in the Psalms of David and incorporate them in their book. He also watches over it, in order that the contents may not be changed.

The psalms of the *Living Book* contain paragraphs laudatory of the "divine race" of the Doukhobors, and contumelious language against the Orthodox Church, the author of all the persecutions of the "elect."

The *Living Book* is consequently the principal source of revealed doctrine. The Holy Scriptures are, on the contrary, considered to be as it were a dead book, the reading of which perverts the understanding. At the beginning of their existence, the Doukhobors not only did not condemn the holy books, but drew from them all that seemed in conformity with their beliefs; above all, the texts of the gospel were used to formulate moral teachings. Later the Bible ended by losing for them its importance altogether. The Doukhobors made an exception, nevertheless, for the Gospel of John, because they discovered in it traces of their doctrine of the Logos. They lay blame upon the Evangelists as falsifiers of the words of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Bible is a dead book, which can never rise to the height of the living word which penetrates the soul.¹¹

Further, the books of the Bible have not a literal sense. Many of the sacred narratives are simple moral allegories. Cain personifies the persecutors of the true

¹¹ Novicky, p. 246.

church; the confusion of tongues, the divisions of Christendom; the passage of the Red Sea, the final discomfiture of the devil; the miracle at Cana, the union of Jesus Christ with our souls, a union which transforms our tears into the sweetest wine. To understand the Holy Scriptures, moreover, the elect have no need of the teaching of the church. If the word of God lives in us, we necessarily feel its mysterious inflow. The individual interpretation of the Holy Scripture is nothing but the inner illumination of the spirit.

The Doukhobors reject the traditions also. The word of man does not deserve credence, whether that word be uttered by the Fathers, or whether it be enunciated by the Councils. The church has no power to judge men and condemn them to hell, because it does not know their individual sentiments and cannot know whether man's actions are prompted by self-love or love of God. God does not condemn those who through ignorance express their ideas badly or interpret badly the sacred books. Those sin who constrain their brethren to accept the teaching originating in their spirit, and believe themselves depositaries of revealed doctrines.

In regard to God, the Doukhobors admit that God exists from eternity; but before God wisdom exists. God dwells on Mount Zion, and Mount Zion is in the realm of faith. There was a time when the Word took refuge in the bosom of God, and God in the bosom of the Word. The idea of God dissolves in the theology of the Doukhobors in a mystical pantheism. Undoubtedly, in their catechism the Doukhobors acknowledge the unity and trinity of God, but in a sense different from that of Christian theology. The First Person is really God; the Second expresses the eager quest of the truth; the truth, then, is the Holy Spirit. The Father is the memory, the Son the reason, the Holy Spirit the will. The Father is the light, the Son the life, the Holy Spirit

the repose. The Father is the height, the Son the length, the Holy Spirit the depth. The first is the height, because it is impossible to conceive anything more exalted; the second is the breadth, because the reason roams in the fields of the infinite; the third is the depth, because human research cannot exhaust its mysteries.

The Trinity is real, because it is incarnated in the society of the elect; if the latter did not exist, God would be a myth. Man thus is identified with God; or rather God is the soul which is operative through three forces. Individuals are distinct elements of divinity, and for this reason the Doukhobors are called among themselves "Sons of God," and venerate one another. Each one has in his soul the spark of divinity.

The Doukhobors do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the man in whom divine intelligence has revealed its fullest energies. Kapustin considered Jesus as a man who differed in no respect from other men, and about whose birth there was nothing supernatural. Jesus is the Son of God in the sense that he represents the divine wisdom. The accounts in the Gospel relating to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are to be understood in a mystical sense. The sick who were healed and the dead who were brought to life by Jesus are sinners. The death of Jesus was not voluntary, otherwise he would not have refused the cup of suffering. The resurrection of Jesus signifies that he is hidden in the souls of the elect. His body suffered the corruption of matter, but his spirit remained at first in the hearts of the Apostles, who were therefore called heavens, and then passed into the souls of the elect.

The Gospel is, as it were, a journal of our existence. Everything that is there narrated concerning Jesus is repeated in us, who are born, suffer, die, and rise again. Jesus is therefore the eternal gospel, living in men's

hearts. He is the word engraved upon our souls. His death does not involve the expiation of the sins of mankind. Jesus is a virtuous man, a son of God, one of the great heroes of the sect; and since he abides in the living recesses of our heart, the mission of the Holy Spirit is useless. In fact, the Doukhobors admit the existence of the Holy Spirit, but do not attribute to it any efficacy in the religious life of mankind. The sanctifying and vivifying power of the Spirit is reserved exclusively for Jesus Christ. The Doukhobors have also rejected the worship of the Virgin Mary, whom they revere only as a woman of eminent virtue.

According to the Doukhobors, human souls existed before the creation of the visible world. The fall of Adam and Eve is threefold: before the creation, after the creation, and in the life of the human race. The chief cause of the fall of the first man was self-love. The sin of Adam was not transmitted to his descendants. Every man is the responsible author of his own salvation or perdition. The sins of the fathers are not a hindrance to the salvation of the sons. Souls are infused into the bodies of children when the latter have attained an age which varies between six and fifteen years, and are sufficiently advanced to learn the psalms of the Doukhobors. After death, the souls of the bad pass into the bodies of brute beasts, and good souls into the bodies of righteous men. The souls of those who do not belong to the sect enter the bodies of unclean animals. When they have gone into the bodies of brutes, they no longer remember anything of their former existence.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not clearly expressed in the Doukhobor confessions of faith. At the end of the world, Jesus Christ, with a human figure, accompanied by the female saints, will come to judge sinners, whom he will condemn to eternal punishment. The

righteous will remain with him on earth. The difference, accordingly, between the present and the future life of mankind will consist in the exclusion of sinners from the dominion of the earth. The righteous will continue to live on earth as they formerly did. But the world will not come to an end, because when the sinners have been cast out, the earth will be heaven. Heaven for the Doukhobors is synonymous with virtue.

Starting with the principle that before God every man must answer for his own deeds, the Doukhobors do not admit the salutary influence of prayers for the dead. They consider death as a change of state, and therefore do not bewail the loss of their dear ones. In the theology of the Doukhobors, the church is not a divine and visible institution, but the assemblage of those whom God chose from among men to guide them in the paths of his grace or of his life. These faithful ones are not bound together by an identical symbol of faith or by the same liturgical practices. They are scattered through the whole world, and assume diverse names, and have in their ranks even persons who do not profess the Christian religion. The very Jews who follow the inner inspiration of the Spirit and who do good are members of this invisible church. Hatred of the hierarchy is a characteristic mark of the sect. The priesthood is not necessary. Jesus is the only priest from whom we ought to expect our salvation. The priestly ministry may be fulfilled by any one who hears the call of the Lord. Successors of Jesus in his priesthood are the men who are pure in mind and body. For the exercise of the priestly ministry it is not necessary to have the permission of any authority whatever. An inward preparation suffices, namely, the illumination of the soul. The office of the priesthood does not consist in performing liturgical functions; the sacerdotal mission consists in the preaching of the word of God and in the conversion of the erring. The priest-

hood of the Orthodox Russian church mechanically celebrates its liturgical rites and repeats sacred discourses; but because it is not inwardly enlightened by God, its words fall on a barren soil. The people remains sunken in ignorance, and concerns itself solely about the external rites. The Orthodox priests, consequently, do not lead souls to salvation, and without warrant usurp to themselves the titles of fathers and teachers.¹²

If the priesthood is inward and the church invisible, the sacraments have no longer any reason for existing. They have a mystical significance. Baptism is useless, especially when it is conferred on children not yet come to the use of reason. The water of baptism bathes the body outwardly but does not purify the soul. By means of an inward baptism the soul is purified in the blood of Jesus Christ, renounces all evil ways, and repents of its misdeeds. The efficacious baptism is the putting away of one's own sins, a spiritual second birth.

There are seven baptisms, or seven spiritual rebirths: (1) The soul abandons its sins; (2) the soul recognizes the ways of the Lord; (3) the soul repeats the words of God; (4) the soul feels the spiritual anointing of prayers; (5) the soul inwardly confesses its faults; (6) the soul communes spiritually; (7) the soul mounts up to heaven by the martyrdom of sufferings or of mortification. He who receives this second baptism becomes superior to the angels, he lives with God, and besides his temporal name receives an eternal name which God will reveal to him in the other life. Those who have not been thus baptized are no different from dogs and cats, and will have no place either in heaven or in hell. The salvation of the soul is very rare: one man out of a thousand is saved, and one woman out of a million, for women are naturally stupid.¹³

¹² Livanov, pp. 84 f.

¹³ Novicky, p. 249.

Confirmation is a useless rite. Confession has no efficacy, for the church has no power to remit or to retain sins. True confession is spiritual, and consists in the penitence of the soul. The Doukhobors exact of their adherents public confession of their faults.

The communion also is rejected, on the ground that Jesus did not demand outward signs but the inward development of the powers of the soul. The bread and the wine enter through the mouth, but do not reach the heart. Jesus purifies us inwardly.

Marriage is contracted without special ceremonies. Parents ought not to hinder free love. The contracting parties must have attained the age of puberty, and they swear mutual fidelity in the presence of God. In many cases the wife is a mother before she comes to live with her husband. If a man abandons his wife after she has become a mother, he is expelled from the community. Divorce is allowed in case of adultery, and in such cases the children remain with the mother. After the death of one of the married pair, the survivor is at liberty to contract a second marriage and a third.

The religious worship of the Doukhobors is extremely simple, and corresponds to their dogmatic teachings. Churches are useless, because subject to decay. The true church is found in the soul, and of it the Doukhobors give a fantastic description. It has four walls: the first is formed by the Apostles; the second of the virgins; the third of the aged men; the fourth of the women and of the *myrrhophori* who went to search for Jesus in his tomb. The church has three doors: one for entrance, one for exit, and the third facing the west. It is filled with faithful servants of God, adorned with curtains, that is, sacred songs. There is in it oil in a goat's horn, and the goat's horn symbolizes the race of the elect. There is also a censer, namely, good deeds. The lighted coals signify the flames of desire, the word of God.

The altar in it is the asylum of true Christians. Upon it rest the sacred vessels, namely, the law of God; the gospel, that is Christ; the cross, whose four points symbolize the prophets, the apostles, the angels, and the archangels, respectively.

Though inimical to external forms of worship, the Doukhobors do not entirely suppress prayer. They have halls in which they gather to praise the Lord, empty and bare halls, with a plain wooden table in the middle. The members of the sect assemble there on festival days. The men take their places on the right, and the women on the left. After saluting one another in the name of the Lord, the first in the row of men on the right recites a psalm, to which the rest listen in silence. When the first psalm is finished, another psalm is recited by the second man, and so on in succession, first down the row of men and then down that of the women. The choice of the psalms is free, and each must recite his psalm from memory. Afterwards they sing, and during the song those present give one another the kiss of peace and bow thrice to each other in reverence of the divinity that is in them. The children prostrate themselves thrice before the aged. When this ceremony is over, the assembly dissolves, with a salutation to the Lord. There is no preacher to explain the psalms; every one is inwardly enlightened. After the service the children say the catechism together, while the adults converse on religious subjects and give vent to their antipathies toward the Orthodox Russian Church, which they call "*griekha*," or Church of the Sinners.

The Doukhobors have no special religious festivals. Outwardly, however, they observe the feast days of the Orthodox calendar, which they devote to collecting honey. They preserve the memory of many observances in honor of the Madonna, and celebrate Saint Flora and Saint Laura in the capacity of protectors of cattle.

The worship of images is, in the eyes of the Doukhobors, a very grave sin. They acknowledge the existence of angels and saints, but regard prayers addressed to them as useless, because every one must be saved by his own efforts. Among the saints who are revered by the Doukhobors as "Sons of God," the most important are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, the three youths who were cast into the fiery furnace, the ancient prophets, the Apostles, and the martyrs of the sect.

The Doukhobors do not use the sign of the cross or any other outward manifestations of religion. Fasting is understood by them in a spiritual sense of abstaining from vice and from drunkenness. They have no special rites even for the burial of the dead. Those in the province of Melitopol confined themselves to singing over the fresh graves of their dear ones the following responsive hymn:

O Doves, with the deep blue wings!

We are not doves, we are not blue.

O Swans, white swans!

We are not swans, we are not white. We are angels, we are archangels; we soar through the world, the snowy world.

What do ye see? What do ye hear?

We see, we hear, how the soul separates from the body, how the soul takes its departure.

Forgive me, my body, my white body. I have lived in thee, have caressed thee, have flattered thy passions, have brought thee to punishment.

Go, O souls, go to Christ the Redeemer, and leave the poor body, leave it in its earthly resting-place.

As will be readily seen, this hymn is a dialogue between the soul, the body, and the angels.¹⁴

¹⁴ Titov, *The Sect of the Doukhobors, Missionerskoe Obozrenie*, 1897, Vol. I, pp. 245-255, 377-388, 497-514; Kameney, *The Sect of the Doukhobors*, St. Petersburg, 1905; Stavrov, *The Sect of the Doukhobors: its Past and its Present*, Khristianskoe Tchtenie, 1905, Vol. I, pp. 237-253, 386-396; Biriukov, *The Doukhobors*, Moscow, 1908; Butkevitch, *The Doukhobors*, Kharkov, 1909.